

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3364
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 3385

LONDON FOR SEITZ

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PINT GH
SUBJ: US RESPONSE TO ARREST OF GHANAIAN OPPOSITION
LEADERS

REF: A) STATE 105114 (NOTAL); B) ACCRA 3169

1. IN MEETING SET UP AT MY REQUEST AFTERNOON APRIL 26
WITH AMBASSADOR HARRY AMONOO, SENIOR PRINCIPAL
SECRETARY OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA), AND
AT THE MOMENT THE HIGHEST RANKING OFFICIAL IN THAT
MINISTRY, I CONVEYED FORMALLY USG CONCERN OVER
ARRESTS OF GHANAIAN OPPOSITION LEADERS, UTILIZING
ALL TALKING POINTS CONTAINED REF A. REFERRING TO
PREVIOUS INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS IN PAST FEW WEEKS
IN WHICH I HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN ALONG SAME LINES
BOTH TO AMONOO AND TO ATTORNEY GENERAL KORANTENG ADDOW,
I SAID I WOULD ALSO BE RAISING THESE CONCERNS WITH
OTHER GOG OFFICIALS.

2. AMONOO NOTED THAT COMMISSIONER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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FELLI, NOW ON TRIP THROUGH EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES,
WOULD NOT BE BACK FOR SOME TIME BECAUSE HE WAS
TRAVELING DIRECTLY TO NEW YORK FOR UNGA SPECIAL
SESSION. IN HIS ABSENCE, AMONOO ASKED IF I WANTED
TO MEET WITH ACTING COMMISSIONER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MAJ. GEN. R.E.A. KOTEI ON THE SUBJECT. I SAID THIS
WOULD BE USEFUL AND AMONOO SAID HE WOULD ARRANGE IT.

(KOTEI IS ALSO COMMANDER OF GHANAIAAN ARMY AND MEMBER OF RULING SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SMC). MY DEMARCHE TO HIM WILL INSURE THAT OUR CONCERN WILL BE REGISTERED DIRECTLY WITH ACHEAMPONG AND OTHER MEMBERS OF SMC.)

3. IN RESPONSE TO MY REPRESENTATION, AMONOO DEFERRED TO GENERAL KOTEI FOR MORE AUTHORITATIVE REPLY BUT OFFERED FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON INTERIM BASIS:

A. USG SHOULD BE ASSURED THAT THE STEPS ALREADY ANNOUNCED WHICH WILL RETURN GHANA TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE BY NEXT YEAR "WILL BE RIGIDLY FOLLOWED."

B. GOG HAS ALREADY EXTENDED INVITATIONS TO A NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS TO SELECT THEIR OWN REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION, INCLUDING THE BAR ASSOCIATION, CHRISTIAN COUNCIL, CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT, INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERS AND OTHER BODIES WHICH HAD OPPOSED CONCEPT OF UNION GOVERNMENT IN REFERENDUM. (COMMENT: THIS IS TRUE, BUT WE UNDERSTAND ENGINEERS HAVE ALREADY DECLINED PENDING RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, AND OTHER GROUPS HAVE REMAINED SILENT.)

C. ALTHOUGH MFA DOESN'T HAVE MUCH INFORMATION ON RECENT ARRESTS, AMONOO SAID, HE UNDERSTOOD THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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THOSE ARRESTED WOULD HAVE EVERY OPPORTUNITY "TO EXPLAIN THEMSELVES." HE NOTED THAT TWO WRITS OF HABEAS CORPUS HAVE ALRAADY BEEN SERVED IN COURTS, ONE IN SEKONDI AND ONE IN HO. (PARA 2 REF B)

4. COMMENT: DESPITE PAINFUL NATURE OF SUBJECT MATTER. OUR MEETING WAS CORDIAL THROUGHOUT. AS I WAS LEAVING, AMONOO, A FORMER AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON AND BONN, SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN EXPECTING SUCH A VISIT FROM ME. HE AND OTHER SENIOR GOG OFFICIALS ARE ACUTELY AWARE OF OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY AND HAVE REFLECTED GENUINE CONCERN ABOUT OUR POSSIBLE REACTION TO RECENT EVENTS HERE IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS. ATTORNEY GENERAL KORANTENG ADDOW, FOR EXAMPLE, TOLD ME ON APRIL 21 THAT HE HAD CONVINCED ACHEAMPONG TO INCLUDE REFERENCE TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN GOG STATEMENT OF APRIL 19TH (REF B) SPECIFICALLY BECAUSE OF AMERICAN CONCERN. WE SHALL KEEP THE PRESSURE ON.
SMITH

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NNN

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